

Managing Water, Wild Salmon and Minerals in Bristol Bay, Alaska

May 10 at noon: State of Alaska's role in large mine permitting

Tom Crafford, Director of the Office of Project Management & Permitting,
Alaska Department of Natural Resources

May 11 at noon: EPA's watershed assessment and tribal outreach efforts

David Allnutt, Acting Director of EPA's Alaska Operations Office
Tami Fordham, EPA Tribal Coordinator

"Bristol Bay, Alaska is an important source of wild Pacific salmon for commercial, recreational, and subsistence users. It produces hundreds of millions of dollars in annual fisheries revenues... and may be the last major watershed in North America that produces historic numbers of wild salmon." *EPA 2/7/11*

On state land in the headwaters of Bristol Bay, "the proposed Pebble Mine is a copper-gold-molybdenum porphyry deposit in the advanced exploration stage... Pebble consists of two contiguous deposits..." in a potentially acid-generating sulfide ore body: "a near surface resource of approximately 4.1 billion metric tons that, if developed, would likely be mined by conventional open-pit mining techniques... and a significantly deeper deposit... containing approximately 3.4 billion metric tons of higher grade ore [that], if developed, would probably be mined via bulk tonnage underground mining methods." *DNR website*

In February 2011, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced that it "will conduct a scientific assessment of the Bristol Bay watershed to better understand how future large-scale development projects may affect water quality and Bristol Bay's salmon fishery, an extraordinary salmon resource for the United States... [and] a watershed essential to the health, environment and economy of Alaska... In 2010, nine federally-recognized Bristol Bay tribes petitioned EPA to use its authority under the Clean Water Act to protect Bristol Bay. Their concerns focused on the potential Pebble Mine project... The assessment, which will focus primarily on the Nushagak and Kvichak watersheds, will be informed by scientific peer review, tribal consultation, federal and state agency participation, as well as public and industry input." *EPA 2/7/11*